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ABSTRACT

This guidance note is designed to assist anyone involved in the Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) throughout the United Kingdom (UK). The UK Action Plan on Biodiversity (1994) sets out the broad strategy and targets for conserving and enhancing wild species and wild habitats for the next 20 years. This guide provides help on how to implement the national strategies at the local level through case studies. The plan makes the case for the inclusion of education and awareness raising; stresses the value of a planned, targeted, and monitored approach; and describes the approaches that the LBAP have found effective. (CCM)

ED 440 839

Education – Awareness to Action

Guidance Note 6

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Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans

This is one of a series of Guidance Notes designed to assist everyone involved in the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans throughout the UK.

The UK Action Plan on Biodiversity, published by the Government in 1994, sets out the broad strategy and targets for conserving and enhancing wild species and wildlife habitats for the next 20 years. A further report by the UK Steering Group, published in December 1995 and endorsed by the Government in May 1996, makes detailed proposals for a large number of species and habitats which require urgent conservation action. The UK Plan, together with its individual plans for species and habitats, now provides the framework for effective delivery of biodiversity conservation at a national level, and defines our international responsibilities. It provides the UK commitment to the Biodiversity Convention signed at Rio in 1992.

Successful implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan requires some means of ensuring that the national strategy is translated into effective action at the local level. Local Biodiversity Action Plans are seen as the means by which this can be achieved. This Guidance is aimed at assisting in the development of these plans. It has been produced by the Council for Environmental Education for the England Biodiversity Group.

Background documents

- *Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan*, HMSO 1994
- *Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report*, HMSO 1995
- *Government Response to UK Steering Group Report on Biodiversity*, CM3260, HMSO 1996

Council for Environmental Education

The Council for Environmental Education (CEE) provides a national focus for education for sustainable development in England, working on behalf of its 80 member organisations. CEE's mission is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are at the heart of education policy and practice.

The CEE Biodiversity Education Strategy Group brings together representatives of nearly 30 national organisations, working together to promote and support biodiversity education policy and practice.

Council for Environmental Education

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Project Management Group

Council for Environmental Education

DETR Biodiversity Secretariat

Farnborough College of Technology

(an Associate College of the University of Surrey)

Northumbrian Water

RSPB

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

The Wildlife Trusts

Other Guidance Notes in this series:

1. An introduction
2. Developing partnerships
3. How Local Biodiversity Action Plans relate to other plans
4. Evaluating priorities and setting targets for sustainable development
5. Incentives and advice for biodiversity

These Guidance Notes are obtainable free from:

Biodiversity Secretariat
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Tollgate House
Houlton Street
Bristol BS2 9JD
and on the UK Biodiversity website: www.jncc.gov.uk/ukbg

This resource has been developed in accordance with the principles set out in *Supporting sustainable development through educational resources: a voluntary code of practice* (DETR, 1999).

March 2000

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS: Education – Awareness to Action

This Guidance Note is part of a series designed to assist everyone involved in the production and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

- It: • makes the case for the inclusion of education and awareness raising
- stresses the value of a planned, targeted and monitored approach
 - describes some approaches that LBAPs have found effective.

Education and awareness work is at an early stage in most LBAPs. The case studies given here show approaches that have worked for other people and may contain ideas that would be relevant in your locality.

Why is education and awareness raising an integral part of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan?

Education and training have a vital role to play in helping to ensure that individuals and the various sectors... have the understanding and skills necessary to sustain biodiversity.

Biodiversity Challenge Group, UK
(Biodiversity Challenge Group 1994)

Education is an active, lifelong process that does not stop at the school gates. It is about developing attitudes and values as well as knowledge and skills. True learning develops through applying concepts to real situations. Involvement in the LBAP process (whether developing objectives, conducting surveys or taking part in practical conservation activities) can increase understanding of biodiversity and inspire participants to take action in their personal and professional lives. This will help you achieve your LBAP targets.

In a recent survey of 83 LBAPs in the UK (Young, 1999), 58% of respondents said they had (or would soon have) an education policy and 28% had (or planned to have) a system for monitoring specific objectives for biodiversity education. Ideally, all LBAPs should have both a policy and a system to monitor its effectiveness.

LBAP practitioners cannot conserve biodiversity alone. Their success is dependent on partnership between and action by organisations and individuals who have an impact on target habitats and species. LBAPs need support from local councils, businesses, landowners and the media, who are influenced by public awareness and concern. To win support you have to convince others that biodiversity is important and that their actions count.

Many people value wildlife – a fact acknowledged by its inclusion in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy as one of the fifteen headline indicators measuring quality of life (*Quality of Life Counts*, DETR 1999). An important aspect of the LBAP process is to raise awareness about the links between species, habitats and individual human activity, so that concern leads to informed and effective action.

CASE STUDY

Involving the community: from suspicion to understanding

The curlew, a once-common bird in southern England, was reduced to only 118 pairs by 1989, due to loss of habitat caused by changes in farming practice. The RSPB and English Nature set up a project in South Devon to save the species, providing information for farmers and landowners about curlew-friendly management, but at first had little success. Despite offers of financial support from government schemes, farmers were reluctant to change the way they managed their land to save a bird most people hadn't heard of.

It became obvious that an education campaign had to be launched on behalf of the curlew. The RSPB set up a programme with local schools, organised guided walks and talks for the wider community and provided farmers with the opportunity to see curlews on their own land.

This approach helped to increase understanding in the whole community and created a climate where farmers were more willing to become involved in the conservation of the curlew. As a result of this partnership, the curlew population had increased to over 450 pairs by 1998 and there are now more farmers wishing to become part of the project than there is government money available for support. Last, but not least, many more South Devon residents now value this special bird on their doorstep.

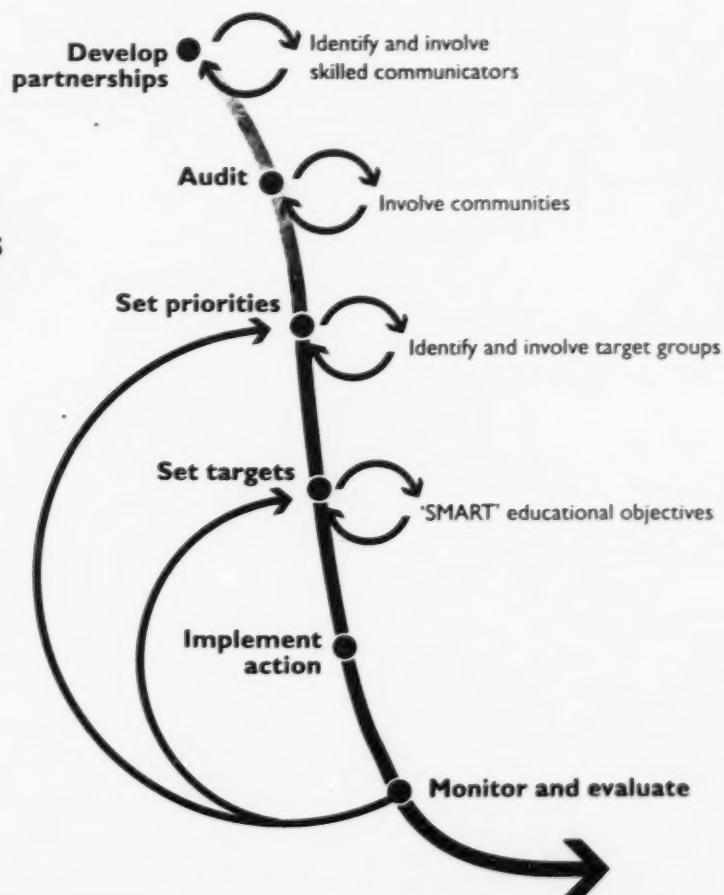
Biodiversity education: the hallmarks of good practice

- Have clear objectives
- Get the priorities right
- Offer experiences that are relevant to your audience
- Get the staff right
- Build in progression
- Practice what you preach
- Offer access
- Look for feedback
- Evaluate

How can we include education and awareness raising in our Local Biodiversity Action Plan?

The diagram below reflects the existing LBAP framework and shows how education and awareness can be integrated. To be fully effective, elements of education and awareness raising should be incorporated at every stage within the LBAP process. However, this process is not linear and the suggestions on the right of the diagram can also apply at stages other than those suggested here. Each LBAP will be responding to different local needs and interests, and will be at a different level of development, so adapt the framework to your particular situation.

Awareness to Action Process





Develop partnerships

– identify and involve skilled communicators

All the discussions you have when you are building partnerships and agreeing broad objectives increase understanding and awareness. Remember that actively involving people in the process is an effective form of education as well as helping you achieve your goal of protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This applies at every stage of the LBAP process.

Every action agreed by your partnership is likely to have an educational aspect, so include skilled communicators in the partnership from the start.

LBAPs and Local Agenda 21

LBAPs are integral to Local Agenda 21. The purpose of LA21 is to involve communities in working towards sustainable development and conserving biodiversity is a crucial part of long-term sustainability. LBAPs can benefit from relevant processes of participation and education that have been developed as part of LA21. Data gathered about local habitats and species will be important indicators of sustainability that should inform the LA21 strategy.

Although some Local Biodiversity Action Plans were produced independently of the Local Agenda 21 process, ideally they should be integrated into it so they contribute to a broader view of the needs of the local community – economic, social and cultural, as well as environmental.

May 1994

Audit

– involve communities

Carrying out your species and habitat audit is an opportunity to engage and educate local people about particular species or habitats and about the LBAP process and purpose. It is also a way to learn from the community and will provide useful data to inform action.

– audit current activity

Organisations in your area will already be doing effective work in raising awareness about biodiversity that can help you achieve your targets. Larger businesses or sectors may have their own BAPs; field studies centres may have existing programmes of biodiversity education; publicity departments in local authorities and businesses will have marketing experience. Find out what is happening and coordinate and build on this.

Effective LBAPs are genuine partnerships. Recognising the skills and potential contributions of different groups will broaden involvement and ownership. Using existing skills and facilities reduces duplication and increases effectiveness.

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CASE STUDY

Community auditing: conserving 'veteran' trees

In Dorset, conserving veteran trees was identified as an issue of local importance. Dorset Wildlife Trust had already audited trees in woodlands and parks but lacked information about trees on farmland and in urban areas. They decided to ask farmers and urban communities to help identify and care for veteran trees.

The Trust produced a targeted leaflet which gave information linked to possibilities for action and involvement. It invited people to complete a survey sheet about the whereabouts and condition of veteran trees, or to become local tree wardens. Landowners were told what can damage veteran trees and offered advice about managing them, plus information about grants. The leaflet was backed up by an extensive press campaign.

The Wildlife Trust was delighted by the response. Completed survey sheets identified a number of trees unknown to them and those of particular interest were visited by specialists to identify management needs. In addition to sending in information, people phoned the Trust to ask if they could help further. Several new volunteer tree wardens came forward in urban areas and landowners requested tree management information and assistance.

Set priorities**- identify and involve target groups**

Involving a whole community is a long, slow process which can only be carried out in stages. Do not attempt to reach 'everyone'. Decide which groups or sectors are most directly concerned with priority species or habitats in your area and what will be the most effective approaches to engaging their support. Think about the medium as well as the message, recognising the language gap that may exist between sectors - someone from the business sector is likely to have more success communicating with business colleagues than a conservationist would have.

Different groups can be involved at different stages of the process, but plans are only likely to lead to action if they are devised in cooperation with those who will need to be involved in implementation.

Our action plan was not written from a conservation expert's point of view. From the start it was a genuine partnership and we have on our steering group people from local government, green businesses, farmers, teachers and environmental groups. The action plans for the different areas were written by the people who need to implement them, facing the question, 'What needs to be done and how are we going to do it?'

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The following format is one you might find helpful in identifying target groups relevant to particular areas of your LBAP.

CASE STUDY

Targeting key sectors for implementation of the Durham BAP

KEY SECTORS	DBAP Engagement Mechanisms	HABITATS				SPECIES	
		Farmland	Standing Open Water	Heathland	Woodland	Black Grouse	Durham Argus
Agriculture	DBAP steering group – FNIAG involvement						
	Farm BAP seminar	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Setting up of an Agriculture and Biodiversity Technical Advisory Group						
Business	The Business of Biodiversity document						
	Local businesses BAP seminar		*				
Developers	Biodiversity for Developers document	*					
Forestry	Not yet secured				*		
Local Authorities	Making a Difference – local authority document	*	*	*	*		*
	DBAP presentations to elected members						
Planning Authorities	Planning for Biodiversity document			*			
Schools and Education	Biodiversity Guidance for Teachers document and training sessions – production is planned for 2000 but not yet secured		*				
Statutory Conservation Bodies	DBAP Steering Group – English Nature and Environment Agency involvement	*	*	*	*	*	*
Voluntary Bodies	General awareness raising – press articles and releases, illustrated presentations						
LEAD PARTNERS		FNIAG	Northumbrian Water	Derwentside District Council	Durham Wildlife Trust	Black Grouse Project – Game Conservancy, English Nature, RSPB & Durham Bird Club	Butterfly Conservation
							English Nature

General points to bear in mind when approaching target groups:-

- Find out their needs and interests – and how they perceive their links with biodiversity
- Use peer group influence – make contact through colleagues or relevant umbrella groups; show examples of good practice in the field
- Try to offer something – what are the benefits of getting involved? What support or incentives are available?
- Explain the aims and the context, but don't prescribe solutions
- Recognise skills and expertise and ask for ideas and advice within the framework of the LBAP
- Help groups to identify small, easy steps that they can take to get involved

CASE STUDY

Understanding each other: what we think they think isn't what they think

Hampshire Wildlife Trust is working in partnership with farmers through the NFU and with business through Norsk Hydro. When carrying out a survey about biodiversity amongst farmers in Hampshire, they discovered the importance of asking people what their needs are before wading in with an action plan for a particular sector.

The greatest surprise came in response to a question about the problems or barriers to achieving conservation work on farms. The expected financial aspects were only considered most important by 40%. The remaining 60% felt other things were greater barriers, including the amount of work involved and a reluctance to sign up to the 5–10 year agreements which are required by agri-environment schemes. But for 20% the biggest barrier was related to advice being confusing or insufficient or not being sure where to get it.

This led the Trust to believe that more farmers would be prepared to enhance land for wildlife, even at slight financial cost, if they were given good advice. The information gave the Trust clear pointers for future action.

Set targets

– 'SMART' educational objectives

For maximum effectiveness, once you have identified your habitat and species objectives, develop a plan of action for education alongside that for conservation. Be clear about your audience and your message, then decide on the best way to convey it (e.g. a general leaflet is rarely the best way to raise public awareness).

You are unlikely to be able to do everything at once, so prioritise important issues. Do some things that are easily achievable and celebrate early successes. This will help to build confidence, interest and credibility to tackle the next stages. You can build other targets on the way.

Choosing 'SMART' targets at the beginning will help you to ensure that monitoring and evaluation are an integral part of the process and will help you to identify gaps and needs to feed back into further planning.

Specific

Is the target clear and definite? Will you know when you've reached it?

Measurable

How will you know you've achieved it?
Can you monitor its effectiveness?

Achievable

Do you have the contacts and resources to do it?

Relevant

Will it help you to achieve your biodiversity aims?
Is it appropriate for the target group?

Time limited

By when will you have achieved it?

Implement action

The following are just a few examples of action taken as part of LBAPs. They each demonstrate effective education with a specific target sector.

CASE STUDY

Get business working for biodiversity, get biodiversity working for your business

Action for wildlife is our business, biodiversity is our product. It is in universal demand; we offer you this opportunity to add biodiversity to your product portfolio.

Durham Biodiversity Action Plan identified industry as a sector with significant impact on biodiversity. As well as having an important role as landowners and resource providers, they can influence customer and employee attitudes.

Northumbrian Water already has its own biodiversity strategy and was the obvious member of the LBAP partnership to communicate most effectively with industry. They organised a seminar at a popular business venue, inviting speakers who would be recognised as influential by industry, including people from the Regional Development Agency and the Government Office North-East. Written invitations to the top 70 companies operating in the North-East were followed up with phone calls and 30 companies plus press were represented on the day.

At the seminar, presentations concentrated on why businesses should be involved in biodiversity planning, how the LBAP could help and what the benefits for the business concerned would be. This was followed up with a written report which explained in business language the purpose of Durham's BAP and how businesses could get involved.

As a result of the seminar a number of businesses have signed up as 'Business Supporters' of the Durham BAP and some have given financial and in-kind support for conservation projects.

CASE STUDY

Awareness raising for local authority members and officers

A broad aim of Cornwall BAP's education and awareness action plan is 'To ensure that biodiversity is fully recognised in economic programmes and spatial plans for the county'. Targeted training for individual district councils, exploring issues of local relevance, was seen as a way of achieving this.

A pilot training day was set up for Carrick District Council. As Carrick is a partner in Cornwall's BAP, the day was marketed as offering tools to help officers and members to carry out their commitment to implementing the Action Plan. The agenda included an introduction to biodiversity and to the wildlife of Carrick, examples of good practice in biodiversity conservation in the district, the potential for integrating economic development and biodiversity, and a site visit to see what action for biodiversity means on the ground.

Fifty people attended, including seventeen councillors. Their response was enthusiastic. As well as action within the District Council itself, with the support of members, training has been planned on the same model for parish councils. The District Council is considering funding an award scheme to support parish biodiversity initiatives which emerge from the training. The successful format will be repeated in other district councils in Cornwall.



CASE STUDY

Formal education as a route to involvement

Stroud Valleys Project, a Gloucestershire community environmental charity, in partnership with Cam Parish Council and with funding from the local adult education department, set up a six-week course entitled 'The Wildlife of Cam'.

The course offered afternoon and evening sessions to include the broadest possible spectrum of participants, and was publicised through the local media, parish newsletters, and displays and posters around the parish. Forty-five people attended.

After the course, participants formed the Cam Wildlife Group with the aim of surveying local biodiversity. A piece of 'wasteland' in the centre of the parish which was surveyed by the group has turned out to be one of only eleven neutral grassland sites in Gloucestershire. Parish councillors who took part in the course are negotiating with the owners of the site to lease it on behalf of the parish and manage it with the help of the group. Plans include its use as an educational resource.

In the neighbouring parish of Stroud, the local Education and Business Partnership asked Stroud Valleys Project to organise a biodiversity and education project. 'A' level biology students from a local school, with training from a professional ecological surveyor, are carrying out a biodiversity survey on land owned by a Tesco superstore.

As well as fulfilling curriculum requirements, the project has potential long-term benefits for the environment. With help from the ecologist, the students are writing a management proposal for turning the site into an urban biodiversity reserve. The proposal will form the basis for starting a community project to manage the site and be part of the parish BAP which, like Cam's, will contribute towards achieving the local BAP.

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Education and awareness raising in an LBAP: the hallmarks of good practice

- Integrate education and awareness raising throughout your LBAP – not as an add-on
- Find out what is going on already and build on existing skills and projects
- Target those most directly concerned with your priority species and habitats
- Establish your target groups, interests and needs before delivering resources or training
- Actively engage people using appropriate messages and messengers
- Promote action which has demonstrable results
- Feed back and celebrate
- Don't be afraid of passion and magic

Monitor and evaluate

Think about monitoring and evaluation – how you will know if you're achieving your objectives – from the start of your action planning (see 'SMART' targets). It will also contribute to the wider process of monitoring biological targets. Remember that as well as quantitative changes (numbers of people coming to a meeting or involved in a project) this is also an opportunity to focus on aspects such as increased knowledge about biodiversity or involvement of new sectors in the community. Make sure that what you learn from this process informs future action.



Funding your education and awareness programme

In the 1999 survey of UK LBAPs, 85% of respondents indicated that the proportion of their biodiversity budget allocated to educational activities was less than 20% or had not been discussed. As the case studies in this Guidance Note have demonstrated, education contributes to LBAP aims at all stages of the process, therefore it is vital to earmark part of the budget in any funding application for education.

When identifying potential sources of funding support for education work, consider both national and local opportunities. Some examples of national schemes include:

English Nature *Local Nature Reserves grant scheme*
Environmental Action Fund (DETR)
Heritage Lottery Fund
New Opportunities Fund
Arts Lottery (Arts for Everyone)
Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (through local waste operators)

Seeking funding from within your local area can be productive, as potential supporters will be interested in demonstrating their commitment to local biodiversity initiatives and a willingness to support the local community. Some of the sectors you will already want to involve as partners may also have funds available to support education and awareness work. Existing examples of successful involvement include local businesses, local branches of national companies, charitable trusts, local authorities, regional development agencies, parish councils, conservation organisations and statutory agencies.

Where to get information

It is not within the scope of this Guidance Note to offer a comprehensive contact list of funding sources and, in any case, contact details change and criteria for schemes are updated regularly. Information may be found in your local library, in directories listing sources of grants, from your local authority or even gained informally from local contacts. CEE's website also offers information on sources of grants and awards (www.cee.org.uk).

What next?

Local Biodiversity Action Plans are still in their early stages and few have a fully trialled approach to education and awareness raising. Pilot projects to establish best practice focused on different sectors are currently being carried out in a number of areas, jointly funded by DETR, The Wildlife Trusts and Farnborough College of Technology. An update to this Guidance Note will be published in due course, containing reports of these projects and others.

If you have been involved with a successful education and awareness initiative that has helped to fulfil your LBAP aims and would like to share this information with others, please contact the Biodiversity Secretariat (details inside front cover). The UK Biodiversity website (www.jncc.gov.uk/ukbg) has a discussion forum, and you can also contribute articles, features and correspondence about biodiversity education and awareness work to *Biodiversity News*, the quarterly newsletter of the Biodiversity Secretariat.

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